

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 696

INFO USMISSION OECD PARIS PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 4712

PASS TO: DOT: J. HERZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, ETRN, GR

SUBJECT: TRANSPORT MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

REF: STATE 104263

1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR FORMULATION AND EXECUTION OF GOG TRANSPORTATION POLICY IS SHARED BY FOUR MINISRIES.

(A) MINISTRY OF COORDINATION IS GOG ECONOMIC PLANNING ARM WHICH COORDINATES ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ECONOMIC MINISTRIES, CONTROLS PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM, AND IS CONDUCTING NEGOTIATIONS FOR EARLY GREEK EC MEMBERSHIP.

(B) MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS IS SPECIFICALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION OF TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION, AND SUPERVISION OF LAND AND AIR TRANSPOT.

(C) MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS IS CHARGED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF HARBORS, AIRPORTS AND ROADS.

(D) MINISTRY OF MERCHANT MARINE FORMULATES GOG SHIPPING POLICY AND SUPERVISES GREEK COAST GUARD AND OPERATION OF MAJOR PORTS -- PIRAEUS (13.1 MILLION TONS OF CARGO PROCESSED IN 1976),
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THESSALONIKI (9.4 MILLION TONS), AND ELEFSIS (4.7 MILLION TONS).

2. GREECE IS AN ASSOCIATE EC MEMBER AND IS ACTIVELY SEEKING EARLY FULL MEMBERSHIP BY 1980 WITH A SUBSEQUENT FIVE-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. IN MARCH, 1977, GREECE RATIFIED THE 1956 CMR CONVENTION ON ROAD TRANSPORT AND GOG POLICIES ARE AIMED AT STANDARDIZATION OF ROAD TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC LEGISLATION WITH EUROPEAN AND

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE. GREECE BELONGS TO IATA, ICAO, IMCO, AND THE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAYS UNION.

3. AIR, RAIL AND CAPITAL AREA URBAN TRANSPORT NETWORKS (EXCLUDING TAXIS) ARE UNDER DIRECT GOVERNMENT CONTROL. INTER-URBAN BUS TRANSPORT, TRUCKING AND SHIPPING ARE PRIVATELY OWNED AND OPERATED, ALTHOUGH CERTAIN COASTAL SHIPPING ROUTES RECEIVE GOG SUBSIDIES. RAILWAYS (1,600 MILES, LARGELY SINGLE TRACK, 60 PERCENT STANDARD AND 40 PERCENT METER GAUGE) ARE OPERATED BY THE HELLENIC RAILWAYS ORGANIZATION (HRO) UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS. OLYMPIC AIRWAYS, THE SINGLE AIR CARRIER, WAS NATIONALIZED IN 1975 WHEN OWNER ARISTOTLE ONASSIS RELINGUISHED A LONG-TERM FRANCHISE. CAPITAL AREA ELECTRICAL BUSES AND ELECTRICAL RAILWAYS WERE NATIONALIZED IN 1970 AND 1976 RESPECTIVELY FOLLOWING EXPIRATION OF FRANCHISES, AND LEGISLATION OF MAY 1977 PROVIDES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNMENT CORPORATION TO OPERATE ALL CAPITAL AREA BUSES.

4. WITH A LAND AREA OF 51,000 SQUARE MILES, GREECE HAS A ROAD NETWORK OF ABOUT 25,000 MILES. OF WHICH 53 PERCENT HAVE BITUMINOUS PAVING. APPROXIMATELY 730,000 CIVILIAN VEHICLES, INCLUDING 13,850 BUSES AND 220,000 TRUCKS ARE IN CIRCULATION. ACCORDING TO UNPUBLISHED GOG FIGURES FOR 1975, 82.4 PERCENT OF ALL INTER-URBAN PASSENGERS USING PUBLIC OR CHARTER TRANSPORTATION TRAVEL BY BUS, 8 PERCENT BY SHIP, 7 PERCENT BY RAIL AND 2.6 PERCENT BY AIRCRAFT.

5. IN MAY 1976, THE IBRD SIGNED A \$30 MILLION LOAN TO GREECE
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FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION OF A 62-MILE ROAD IN WESTERN PELOPONNESUS. PROJECT IS SUPERVISED BY MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS.

6. THE GREEK-FLAG MERCHANT FLEET IS CURRENTLY FIFTH LARGEST WITH 3,625 SHIPS, TALLING 30.2 MILLION GROSS TONS. INCLUDING GREEK-OWNED VESSELS OF FOREIGN REGISTRY, THE GREEK FLEET IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST WITH TONNAGE OF 47.6 MILLION GROSS, WHICH RESULTED IN 1976 FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS OF \$913 MILLION. ON MARCH 31, THERE WERE 265 GREEK-FLAG SHIPS IDLE TALLING 2.5 MILLION GROSS TONS OR 8.3 PERCENT OF TOTAL TONNAGE. GREECE HAS ESTABLISHED TAX AND OTHER INCENTIVES FOR GREEK SHIPOWNERS TO RELOCATE OFFICES TO PIRAEUS FROM LONDON AND OTHER SHIPPING CENTERS.

7. THE GOG CY 1977 PUBLIC INVESTMENT BUDGET PROVIDES \$100 MILLION FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE, \$25 MILLION FOR AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS, AND \$10 MILLION FOR ADDITIONAL PORT FACILITIES. MAJOR GOG TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS CURRENTLY INCLUDE:

(A) NEW AIRPORT FOR ATHENS AT SPATA. A MASTER PLAN WAS PREPARED RECENTLY BY FRENCH-GERMAN-GREEK CONSORTIUM, AND TWO U.S. FIRMS ARE SEEKING PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONTRACT NOW PENDING FOR DECISION BY COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER VOYATZIS.

(B) PROPOSED SUBWAY FOR ATHENS: A CONTRACT FOR PRELIMINARY DESIGN WAS AWARDED TO A FRENCH CONSORTIUM IN JANUARY 1977, AND PROPOSALS WILL SOON BE SOLICITED FOR PREPARATION OF A FEASIBILITY REPORT.

(C) AUTOMATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL: FAA AND TWO EUROPEAN FIRMS HAVE SUBMITTED PROPOSALS FOR ATC STUDY AND MATTER IS BEFORE COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER FOR DECISION.

(D) GREECE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA IN JANUARY 1977 FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR ROLL-ON/ROLL-OFF FERRY SERVICE
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BETWEEN VOLOS AND LATAKIA, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TRANSIT TRAFFIC TO MIDDLE EAST.

(E) ELECTRIFICATION OF RAILWAY TO YUGOSLAV BORDER: PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE OIL CONSUMPTION, AND ROMANIAN AND FRENCH FIRMS HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED TO PREPARE INITIAL STUDIES. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL IS JOHN LAMBROS, GOVERNOR, HELLENIC RAILWAYS ORGANIZATION.

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(F) "EUROPORT" IN NORTHERN GREECE: LONG-RANGE PLANS, AS YET NOT FUNDED, INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MAJOR PORT IN THE AXIOS RIVER BASIN NEAR THESSALONIKI TO SERVE AS SOTHERN TERMINAL FOR A CANAL SYSTEM, UNDER STUDY BY UNDP, LINKING GREECE WITH EUROPEAN INLAND WATERWAYS.

8. KEY OFFICIALS INIMPLEMENTING GOG TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ARE:

(A) MINISTER OF COORDINATION PANAGIS PAPALIGOURAS:
BORN IN 1917 AT CORFU, PAPALIGOURAS IS LAW GRADUATE OF ATHENS UNIVERSITY WITH DOCTORATE IN SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE FROM UNIVESITY OF GENEVA. SERVED AS MINISTER OF COMMERCE (1953-1954), COORDINATION (1954-1955), COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (1956-1958), COORDINATION (1961-1963), NATIONAL DEFENSE (1967) AND COORDINATION 1974-). SPEAKS ENGLISH. RANKS AFTER PRIME MINISTER CONSTANTINE CARAMANLIS IN GREEK CABINET.

(B) MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS GEORGE VOYATZIS:
BORN IN 1913 IN EUBOEIA, VOYATZIS GRADUATED AS CIVIL ENGINEER FROM ATHENS UNIVERSITY WITH POST-GRADUATE STUDIES IN SWITZERLAND AND ITALY. SERVED AS MINISTER OF MERCHANT MARINE (1955-1958), EDUCATION (1959-1961), AND COMMUNICATIONS (1974-). SPEAKS ENGLISH.

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(C) MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS CHRISTOFOROS STRATOS:
BORN IN 1924 IN PATRAS AND EDUCATED IN LAW AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY, STRATOS IS INDUSTRIALIST WHOSE FAMILY OWNS LEADING LOCAL COTTON INDUSTRY. SERVED AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION (1961 AND 1963), TRANSPORTATION (1964), INTERIOR (1966), AND PUBLIC WORK (1974 -). SPEAKS ENGLISH.

(D) MINISTER OF MERCHANT MARINE ALEXANDROS PAPADONGONOAS:
BORN IN 1931 AT TRIPOLIS AND GRADUATED FROM GREEK NAVAL ACADEMY, PAPADONGONAS IS RETIRED NAVAL OFFICER WITH RECORD OF ACTIVE RESISTANCE TO PREVIOUS MILITARY JUNTA.
APPOINTED MINISTER OF MERCHANT MARINE IN 1974 AFTER ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT. SPEAKS ENGLISH.

(E) DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS ATHANASIOS TSALDARIS:
BORN IN 1921 IN ATHENS, TSALDARIS IS SON OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER. STUDIED LAW AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY WITH POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT COLUMBIA. SERVED AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF SOCIAL SERVICES (1958-1963), DEPUTY MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICE (1974), AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (1976 -). SPEAKS ENGLISH.
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